DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 046 493 PS 003 942

AUTHOR Armington, David E.
TITLE A Plan for Continuing Growth.
INSTITUTION Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, Mass.
PUB DATE Nov 69
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Advisory Committees, Classroom Environment, Classroom Techniques, *Educational Objectives, *Individual Needs, Program Descriptions, *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS British Infant Schools, EDC, Education Development Center, *Project Follow Through

ABSTRACT

To reshape our schools, top priority must be given to programs such as Follow Through which emphasize curriculum change and teacher education. The Education Development Center Follow Through Program, inspired by an 8-year association with the revolution in English primary schools, formulated these objectives: (1) to help schools create classroom environments responsive to the individual needs of children as well as to the talents and styles of the teachers; and (2) to develop the advisory concept to facilitate growth and change in schools. The key elements of this approach are the open classroom; the teacher as researcher-experimenter rather than authority figure; and the advisory service. Advisors are experienced educators who work in unthreatening ways with schools and teachers to help them realize their potentials and to make change self-sustaining. The three major functions of the advisory are to support research and development; to maintain a workshop and resource center; and to facilitate communications between classrooms and teachers. In 1969-70, twelve EDC advisors served nine school districts in eight widely-scattered states. Plans are being formulated to establish local advisory groups in school districts. (AJ)

ED 046493

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Education Development Center
"Follow Through" Program

A PLAN FOR CONTINUING GROWTH

I. THE PROBLEM

If schools are to nourish in deeply significant ways the growth and learning of all children rather than a few, school as an institution must change drastically. "Meeting the needs of the individual" is standard idiom among schoolmen, yet schools continue their historic role of screening individuals, selecting the fit and rejecting the unfit, implicitly telling many young people that they have needs which schools cannot meet. Competition, pass and fail, prescribed curricula, minimum requirements, all these continue as hallmarks of the system, dramatic evidence of the persistent contradiction between our practices and our ideals.

The so-called contemporary revolution in education has thus far been largely superficial. Promising advances in curriculum, in technology, and in knowledge of the learning process have scarcely begun to modify long-established classroom practices and attitudes. Schools have, for the most part, absorbed "innovations" without significant institutional change. Many teachers and children, for example, are now using new vocabularies which may impress or bewilder their parents (as in "new math"), yet we must seriously question the degree to which the verbal novelties are associated with deeper understandings and with meaningful personal growth. An elementary principal, to take another example, bemoans the fact that his school has more expensive instructional equipment than any other in the system, yet still his children are acquiring neither competence in reading nor the desire to read. A pioneer in the new math despairs when he finds fresh ideas misunderstood and distorted in the classroom, teachers tending to teach them in the same old ways. An imaginative and insightful curriculum developer deliberately modifies his materials to satisfy a market demand for "easy to teach" or "teacher-proof"

PS 003942

programs. Student resistance, in the form of overt rebellion, passive conformity, or aggressive, self-centered manipulation of the system, compels us to acknowledge that most young people continue to look upon school as an obstacle course which they must run rather than as an avenue to personal fulfillment.

Although the ferment of the past decade has not yet fundamentally affected the schools, we believe that it has helped to clarify the nature of the problem. Recent experience strongly suggests that piecemeal approaches are not sufficient, that innovations in curriculum, in school architecture, in instructional equipment do not necessarily improve the quality of education. We know that it is not enough to rewrite the math program, or the English, or the science, or all of them together. It is not enough to put TV sets in the classroom, to install moveable walls, or to institute team teaching. While such innovations may be useful in particular instances, they seldom affect the human environment and the vital dialogue between children and teachers. A preoccupation with technology, programs, and "things" may, in fact, tend to forestall serious confrontation of the basic problems which, we believe, are essentially human.

From the age of five until he is nearly eighteen a child spends a substantial part of his waking life at school. How relevant this compulsory occupation is depends largely on the kind of place school is. This, in turn, depends largely on the adults who run it--the teachers and administrators--and behind them the board of education and the community. We believe that significant institutional change is not possible unless <u>all</u> of these groups begin to look at education differently. The main responsibility for reshaping the school must, however, rest primarily with teachers and administrators. Of course, education is the proper concern of the total community:

new modes of community participation are urgently needed. But changes in schools cannot be effective or enduring unless they generate understanding and commitment on the part of professional educators. If we wish to reshape the school, we must give top priority to programs that foster their continuing professional growth. Curriculum change and teacher education must go hand in hand, and this tandem development needs to occur within the school context, so that the growth of teachers and administrators can have a direct impact upon their institutions.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE EDC APPROACH

The EDC Follow Through Program draws much of its inspiration from our eight-year association with the revolution in English primary schools. Our program has been referred to as a "model". We are reluctant to use this word because it suggests to many people a panacea--a program or "package" which, if understood and adopted, would somehow solve all problems. English primary schools emphatically do not represent a system, program, or "package". Schools we have visited vary widely in style and quality. Good English schools differ enormously. Most of our contacts have been with teachers and heads of schools in Leicestershire, a county in the Midlands of England. What we have found there, particularly in the "infant schools" (primary, in our terms) and increasingly in the "junior schools" (upper elementary) is a climate and scheme of organization that foster the continuing self-renewal of the schools and of the teachers and children in them.

In recent decades the evolution of English primary schools has been marked by a style which is pragmatic and action-oriented. A characteristic feature has been the degree to which each school and classroom is encouraged to develop in its own way. As a result, schools and teachers tend to think of themselves as researchers and experimenters, responding to the endless challenge of doing a better job today than was done yesterday. Because the curriculum content of this approach is not narrowly specified, each school and class tends to develop its own personality, mirroring the needs and interests of the children as well as the talents and styles of the teachers. Because diversity and practical experimentation are built into the fabric of many of the schools, teachers and principals learn to think of themselves as participants in the process of improving education. The avenues between schools and the formal centers of educational research are, perhaps, more

open than in this country; the distinction between development and implementation is less sharp. Some of the most productive research originates in the classroom.

One important agent in the growth of the Leicestershire schools during the past two decades has been the "Advisory Center," a group of individuals whose sole function is to facilitate change. Advisors play a unique role, one for which there seems at present no precise counterpart in American public education. As facilitators of change advisors have extensive knowledge of the learning process, practical experience as teachers, and familiarity with curriculum and materials. They have the capacity to work with teachers in unthreatening ways, to be sensitive to the needs and strengths of each school and classroom, and to take account of the social and "political" elements that may affect the forces of change in those situations. The advisor's position is flexible. His style is to work with those individuals who are ready for his services. His aim always is to help schools realize their own unique potentialities and to help make change self-sustaining.

Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of an advisor in doing his job is that he is just what his title imples - an advisor. He is not a supervisor: he does not have the right to go into a school or classroom, but goes only on invitation (though obviously when he knows the people involved he often asks to be invited!). He is not an administrator, nor does he have anything to do with such things as promotions or salary. In short, shorn of most of the trappings of power there is only one thing he can do: give advice. Often, his advice is heeded.

PS 00942

English primary schools have evolved over many decades and fit the English landscape. We do not claim that the best of English primary school education can or should be transplanted to this country in a mechanical or

simplistic way. In the need for continuing change and growth in education, however, both countries share a common concern. We believe that certain fundamental elements of the English experience are applicable to our situation.

III. THE EDC APPROACH

OBJECTIVES. The objectives of the EDC Follow Through Program are as follows:

1. To help schools create classroom environments responsive to the individual needs of children as well as to the talents and styles of the teachers.

2. To develop the advisory concept - ways of facilitating growth and change in schools.

KEY ELEMENTS

The Open Classroom. The environment we seek to create within the school is one which is truly responsive to the needs and interests of children; in which children's learning is deeply rooted in experience; where knowledge becomes important because it is relevant and put to use; and where children in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, can carry on with each other and with adults the kind of open dialogue that is the essence of good education. In such an environment most of the traditional academic goals are, of course, still important, but children will have the opportunity to pursue them in more flexible and self-directing ways so that their learnings become a part of their life-style outside the classroom as well as inside.

In this age of the "knowledge explosion" it is difficult to generalize about the subject-matter content of the curriculum. There is probably no sacred body of information that all children everywhere must be exposed to. What is taught in any particular school or classroom will be strongly influenced by local conditions and objectives. How it is taught and the conditions under which children will be permitted to learn are our major concern.

Communications skills are important in all academic situations, and here too the learning environment is critical. We believe that the skills of literacy - reading and writing - develop more surely if they are not treated as academic exercises in a vacuum but are taught in rich environments which stimulate children's imagination and thought and foster their desire to

communicate.

We believe, finally, that if children are going to live fully in the modern world, the schools must embrace objectives that go far beyond literacy training, the dissemination of information, and the acquisition of concepts. The accumulating experience in early childhood education in this country and overseas suggests that these larger aims must be taken seriously from the very outset of formal schooling, and that the environment which provides for them provides also a sure foundation for academic learning.

What are some of our educational aims? Here are a few that we think important, and which in some honest form are relevant to the education of children of all ages. Although we prefer to phrase them as questions, they could readily be rephrased into the style of curriculum objectives.

> Do the children initiate activities? Are they self-directing? Do they take responsibility for their own learning?
>
> Are they capable of intense involvement? Does their curiosity often lead to concern, and beyond concern to commitment?
>
> Do they continue to wonder and to imagine, and do they bring their sense of humor into the classroom?
>
> Are they willing to face uncertainty and change, and to tackle complexities that they have not been taught how to manage? Are they unafraid of being wrong?
>
> Do they challenge ideas for the purpose of reaching deeper understandings? Are they open and honest with themselves, with adults, and with each other?
>
> Do they respect themselves, others, and the environment? Are they learning responsibility as an integral part of freedom?

Classrooms truly responsive to the needs and interests of young children will develop their unique "personalities," but they will also tend to have certain common characteristics. Although it is difficult to know what a child is learning at any moment, one can describe some of the characteristics of a classroom for young children in which good learning is likely to occur.

Here is a partial list.

1. There is a rich environment of materials for children to explore, and there are abundant opportunities for learning through experience.

2. Children's responses to the environment provide many of the starting points for learning. Activities most often arise from the needs and interests of the group rather than from a prescribed curriculum. When commercial materials and programs are used, they must be made available in ways that protect the children's responsibility for their own learning.

3. With guidance from the teacher the children plan their own activities, drawing from a range of relevant choices.

4. Each child is free to explore an interest deeply and is also free to disengage when an activity no longer seems appropriate.

5. Typically, there is a variety of activities going on simultaneously, each child working in ways best suited to his interests, talents, and style.

6. There are few obvious barriers between subjects, and much of the children's work is, in fact, interdisciplinary.

7. There is minimum dictation by the clock. A flexible schedule permits children to learn according to their individual rhythms of engagement and disengagement.

8. The children talk with each other about their work and often work together. Their learning is frequently a cooperative enterprise marked by dialogue.

9. All forms of expressive representation - in the arts and in movement as well as in language - are considered valid and important.

10. Groupings are not based on fixed criteria such as I.Q. or reading level, but are kept flexible, shifting with the changing needs and interests of the children.

11. The teacher serves in a supportive rather than a didactic role, guiding the children, provisioning and structuring the environment. She is both a sensitive observer of and an active participant in the life of the classroom.

The teacher as researcher-experimenter. Modern education offers teachers the opportunity for a new vision of their professional role. The concept of teacher as authority figure and supreme dispenser of knowledge must be changed. Now, more than ever, learning requires that teachers, as well as children, adopt the spirit and style of the experimenter. Because of recent developments

in learning materials and technology, it is now possible to provision the school environment richly, to put the world of man and nature at the fingertips of each child. We now have the capacity to produce a varied and truly flexible learning environment responsive to a wide variety of backgrounds, interests, and talents. In such an environment the teacher must be, first of all, an investigator of his students, diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses, making decisions appropriate to their individual growth. Secondly, he must have the opportunity, indeed the responsibility, to continue his own learning. The classroom environment we envision makes it easy for children and teachers to be collaborators in learning.

In a climate favorable to diversity and experimentation, there will be many teachers and administrators who do not wish to experiment, or who lack the capacity to do so effectively. Many will prefer the security of the syllabus and a more traditional mode. However, there are others - more numerous than one might suppose - who are deeply dissatisfied with prevailing practices in schools and who are capable of pioneering. At present few of these individuals outwardly buck "the system". In various ways they compromise and play safe. But where there is encouragement from the system, and appropriate support, they are responding to the opportunity to change. Such teachers and administrators are the potential growth points for the internal transformation of the schools.

The Advisory. In order to help school systems, teachers, and administrators who are attracted to this philosophy of education and wish to take first steps in putting it into practice, EDC has established an advisory team patterned somewhat along the lines of the Leicestershire Advisory Center. This year (1969-70) nine school districts have requested and are receiving advisory services on a regular basis. They are Laurel, Delaware (one school);

Washington, D. C. (one school); Philadelphia, Pa. (four schools); Lackawanna County, Pa. (eleven schools); Burlington, Vermont (one school); Paterson, New Jersey (two schools); Johnston County, North Carolina (three schools); Rosebud, Texas (one school); and Chicago, Illinois (one school). In these schools there are altogether more than 80 classrooms where the teachers, with EDC support, are striving to work toward more open forms of education for their children.

The advisory concept in the United States is in a formative stage. With its present organization and capabilities, the EDC advisory group represents a first attempt to develop a new mechanism for helping schools bring about change. In our current work with the nine school districts mentioned above, we are learning a great deal about what an advisory service needs to be if it is to do an effective job. We are also learning about the need for local school advisory services in order to provide for continuing growth.

IV. AN ADVISORY SERVICE IN ACTION - A BEGINNING

Whenever a major curriculum change is introduced into a school or classroom, the teachers who are involved need help. If the change involves the use of a new textbook or a revision in the prescribed syllabus, the assistance can usually be provided through an appropriate orientation, after which most teachers can be expected to follow the new program more or less on their own. Orientation courses and occasional briefings by supervisory personnel are probably the most common traditional methods for introducing teachers to new programs. They are methods characteristic of our syllabus-oriented school culture.

The philosophy of open education requires a different approach from that usually involved in supervision. Where the teacher is operating within a much broader framework, with freedom to structure her program to fit the needs and interests of her particular children, and where the children themselves take part in the day-to-day planning of their own education, the teacher needs far more than initial orientation and intermittent briefings. She needs the assurance of continuing and timely support as she responds to the unfolding requirements and opportunities of her classroom. During the period when she is learning to work in new ways her requirements for support are especially great. During this period there are many situations outside the classroom that also urgently demand attention. Basic changes in educational practices in the classroom can only occur within a broader context of change. The school, the school system, and the community must become involved in positive ways.

Perhaps the clearest way to suggest the variety and complexity of the factors affecting change in developing situations is to summarize briefly some of the specific activities that currently engage EDC advisors in their efforts to support teachers in the Follow Through Program in Laurel, Washington, D. C.,

Burlington, Lackawanna County, and Philadelphia. Here are some of the major kinds of activities advisors are involved in:

1. Conducting orientation courses for teachers and administrators in the philosphy of the open classroom and in techniques for making it work.

2. Visiting classrooms on a regular basis (currently four advisor-days per month at each site, the advisors working in pairs).

3. Conducting teacher workshops in reading, mathematics, science, and art within the context of the open education classroom.

4. Conducting informal teacher seminars dealing with various aspects of children's learning and with problems of classroom organization and procedure.

5. Conducting seminars for teacher-aides and community helpers.

6. Conducting evening programs for parents, including film and slide presentations, and classroom workshops in which the parents have a chance to explore, understand and contribute to the learning materials available for their children.

7. Arranging for outside consultant services in response to specific needs and requests.

8. Carrying on a continuing dialogue with individual teachers about their own situations, working out with each one some appropriate next steps for the development of her classroom.

9. Writing letters to teachers as follow-up to oral discussions. Such letters typically contain suggestions custom-tailored to individual needs and capabilities.

10. Providing books, pamphlets, and articles in response to general need and as part of continuing in-service education.

11. Providing special curriculum materials on a custom-tailored basis.

12. Providing assistance to teachers in securing free and inexpensive materials to enrich the classroom environment.

13. Developing learning materials, often in response to particular classroom needs, and often from ideas that originate in the classroom.

14. Developing prototypes of various kinds of instructional equipment and attempting to arrange for their replication in quantities needed for classroom use.

15. Providing the facilities of a design laboratory so that a teacher's promising idea for a piece of classroom equipment can be developed.

16. Trying to arrange for adequate discretionary funds to be made available to teachers, so that small purchases of materials can be made in response to needs as they arise. A teacher should not need to pay for the "extras" out of her own pocket, since these "extras" are so often essential.

17. Arranging for teachers to visit each other's classes, both within and between school systems.

18. Developing a communications system based on printed material: for example, classroom vignettes of children's learning; brief commentaries on the use of learning materials; monographs dealing with learning and curriculum; and extracts from worthy books and articles on education.

19. Trying to find out from the appropriate school administrators why certain classroom materials might not have been ordered or, if ordered, why not delivered.

20. Maintaining communication with appropriate administrators, bringing to their attention ways in which they can lend further support to teachers and to the program in general.

This partial listing of activities should help illuminate three aspects of the advisory concept: strategy for change; the advisor's way of working; and the functions of a comprehensive advisory service. Let us consider each in turn.

Strategy for change. There are two vital points to be made.

1. Imposed change, whether from outside the system or from outside the classroom, is seldom effective or enduring. Real growth arises from the needs and aspirations of individual teachers and administrators, supported by and responsive to the community they serve. The advisor's strategy is to work in places and with individuals who are ready for change, who have even a partial sense of the directions in which they want to move, and who need and request advisory help. Advisors go only where they are invited, and the relationship must always be one of mutual trust. The existing Follow Through classes represent "growth points" in the process of change. As these teachers are deliberately trying to push back the frontiers of their own knowledge about effective ways of working with children, the spirit of their dialogue tends to infect

other teachers and administrators and parents, creating a climate in which worthy ideas spread.

2. Advisors can facilitate change only if they are available, and they can be available only if their right to exist is clearly established by the school system. They need not necessarily be a part of the system (the EDC advisory is not), but their status and function must be firmly endorsed by the school authorities.

The Advisor's way of working. The advisory relationship with teachers and administrators is based on shared values about the way children should be educated. Within broad areas of agreement, the advisor does not attempt to impose specific ideas; he does not try to sell ready-made programs, "packages," or methods. On the contrary, his job is to respond to the demands of the situation. He does not tell people what they should do, but tries to extend what they are capable of doing. He tries to sense what can be changed in a particular situation, to sense the strengths that can be built upon. Being sensitive to the stages of growth in a school environment he helps by suggesting appropriate next steps.

A comprehensive advisory service. The present EDC advisory is small (four advisors and one materials-development specialist), but our activities, even at this early stage, suggest the variety of services that an advisor needs to provide. From our experience four different but interrelated functions are emerging:

Direct Services

Research and Development

Workshop and Resource Center

Communications

These four components must not be viewed in isolation from each other. We have already discussed the direct services to teachers. We are discovering that

direct services inevitably generate the need for activity in research and development, for a workshop and resource center, and especially for communications. Let us describe briefly these three supporting functions of the advisory, again based on our experience to date.

1. Research and Development. In order to support the innovative activities of teachers and children, advisors should have the support of a laboratory, outside the classroom, where special materials can be developed and where additional ideas can be generated. The laboratory is a place where teachers, curriculum specialists, and researchers can meet to work on projects of mutual interest. Such a laboratory can serve as a center for teacher training and for the continuing study of elementary education. In its work during the past few years, Education Development Center has been moving toward this kind of broad capability.

2. Workshop and Resource Center. A teacher needs a place where she can go for assistance: to talk with an advisor about special materials needs in her classroom; to work with curriculum materials or instructional games; to review books on special topics; to make things for her classroom, such as furniture or shelves from "tri-wall" cardboard. Such informal work sessions often provide a stimulating setting for the exchange of ideas between advisors and teachers from various classrooms and schools. Readily accessible resource centers can be used on a drop-in basis by teachers, after school or in the evenings, and can serve as places where parents can become involved. A more distant facility, such as a regional center, would operate somewhat more formally, with scheduled workshops and residential seminars.

3. Communications. Teamwork among teachers is a relatively new phenomenon. Often a teacher does not know what goes on in other classrooms of her own building. She rarely hears about classrooms in other parts of her system

and knows even less about schools in other systems, in other states, or other countries. Isolation prevents many teachers and schools from developing to their full potential. A critical function of an advisory service is to facilitate communications. A small service on a slim budget will of necessity concentrate on inexpensive modes of communication, such as intra-system classroom visits, informal memoranda, slides, seminars and conferences. A more adequate service would tackle more ambitious projects involving film, videotape, travel, teacher-exchanges, books and pamphlets, and classroom-centered research by two teachers who share a classroom in order to work on a special project.

An important adjunct of the communications function is the identification of schools that are ready to pioneer. An equally important function is the identification of individual teachers and administrators who are ready to begin working in new ways but whose isolation prevents them from making a start.

V. AN ADVISORY SERVICE IN ACTION - ESSENTIAL NEXT STEPS

In 1969-70, twelve EDC advisors based in Newton, Massachusetts are providing support services to nine school districts in eight widely scattered states. These advisors, working in pairs, are spending several days each month in each of these school districts. In most of these situations, the program this year involves kindergarten and first grade children and their teachers. In each of the communities the present EDC input is expended in several directions simultaneously--toward the teachers, toward administrators and supervisory personnel, toward parents and community--in an effort to meet the need for comprehensive reeducation of all parties whose actions and attitudes shape the education environment of the school. Direct support of each classroom teacher is of course our crucial assignment, because it is in the classroom that a more effective approach to the education of children must be demonstrated.

We anticipate that next year nearly twice as many children and teachers will be involved in EDC Follow Through: the present group of children will be followed into second (or in a few cases third) grade and a new group added to the kindergarten. In assessing what has been achieved thus far, we believe that the following three-point resume is fair and accurate:

1. A large percentage of the teachers and principals with whom we are working are highly receptive to the philosophy of open education and are actively engaged in efforts to create a suitable climate for it in their schools and classrooms. Parents who have become involved in the program through evening seminars and workshops have been openly enthusiastic and supportive. A number of teachers and schools have therefore made promising beginnings.

2. The EDC advisory group has not had the human and physical resources to provide the sustaining help that these many school and classroom situations require. A two- or three-day visit monthly is simply not enough, and communications by mail, while valuable, are no substitute for direct contact. Next year, as the program extends into the second grade, the task of teacher and parent reeducation will be even for formidable than at present. Advisory support must be established on a broader basis.

3. Long-distance advising by a group such as EDC cannot be effective without active and sustaining participation by the local school district. This means that local personnel, in addition to administrative staff, must be available to provide continuing support to teachers. Local advisory services must be established within each school district, if open and flexible forms of education are to develop.

A Local Advisory Service: Local advisory services are necessary for two reasons: (1) Effective change arises from the felt needs and aspirations of a group of people and must be sustained by their own leadership. Outside agents can be helpful catalysts only within the context of this leadership. (2) Teachers who are working in ways that are drastically different from what they have known in the past need continuing support close at hand.

Parts of this support must obviously come from school administrators and supervisors, for without their cooperation no change is possible. But these individuals are already burdened with their own responsibilities. They seldom have the time, and in many cases the expertise, to provide the kind of assistance required by teachers who are working to make open education a reality. Other individuals who can learn to function in an advisory capacity to the classroom teacher on a continuing basis are needed.

In each of the nine communities where we are now working, individuals with advisory potential are beginning to emerge. In some situations they are classroom teachers who, given more experience with open education in their own rooms, will be ready to assist other teachers. In other situations they are supervisors or "consulting teachers" who have the interest and capacity to learn a new role. Several such individuals are already beginning to function in this way, but they need additional training and experience in an advisor apprenticeship program established on a more formal basis. An advisory apprenticeship would include experiences such as workshops and seminars conducted by experienced advisors and subject specialists, study visits to schools where open education is operating successfully, on-the-job apprenticeship with experienced advisors, and an intensive apprenticeship (perhaps for a full year) as a "second teacher" in a successful classroom.

There is no single pattern for the development of local advisory services. Their form and scope will depend upon local needs and resources. A very small school system such as Laurel, Delaware would probably begin with one local advisor specializing in direct services to teachers in one school. In Philadelphia where there are now 25 EDC Follow Through classrooms in four schools, several local advisors are essential to the support of the program. Initially, a minimal advisory center in Philadelphia might be a one-room headquarters for the local advisors concentrating on direct services to teachers. A more adequate center would include the workshop and resource functions and a communications capability. Eventually, a large urban system should be able to provide a research and development component as an integral part of its advisory service. There might be several advisory centers suitably spaced around the city.

Thus the advisory concept can develop in many forms. It is to be assumed that small school systems and large, with their own advisory capability, would benefit from continuing contacts with outside advisory centers established on state or regional bases.

VI. CONCLUSION

Head Start proposed to get children ready for schools as they are. The existing institutions were regarded as "givens" in the situation. There was widespread recognition of the fact that most schools, even those in poverty areas, have a strong middle-class bias, and it was felt that if so-called disadvantaged children could be given compensatory training to offset the meagerness of their home backgrounds they would then be ready to succeed in these middle class schools. Experience has demonstrated the fallacy of this premise. The widespread failure of Head Start children to prosper once they entered regular school testifies to the profound inability of these schools to meet the real needs of the children. But these schools are not solely to blame. Schools in more favored surroundings also fail, and on a grander scale than most educators care to admit. There is a general sickness that afflicts much of American education, in the suburbs as well as in the big cities. This sickness can be described most simply as the dehumanization of the educational process.

Fundamental change in the climate of the American school is necessary if children are to find there the challenge and the sense of personal fulfillment and commitment that lead on to a life of learning and purposeful endeavor. The EDC Follow Through Project is not trying to provide compensatory training. Nor is it trying to shore up specific weaknesses in the curriculum or in the children. The educational system does not need minor adjustments. It requires major overhaul. When we recognize in all seriousness that education begins with individual human beings, we shall have made a significant beginning.

David E. Armington
Director
Follow Through Project
November 1, 1969